by Dylan Horrocks

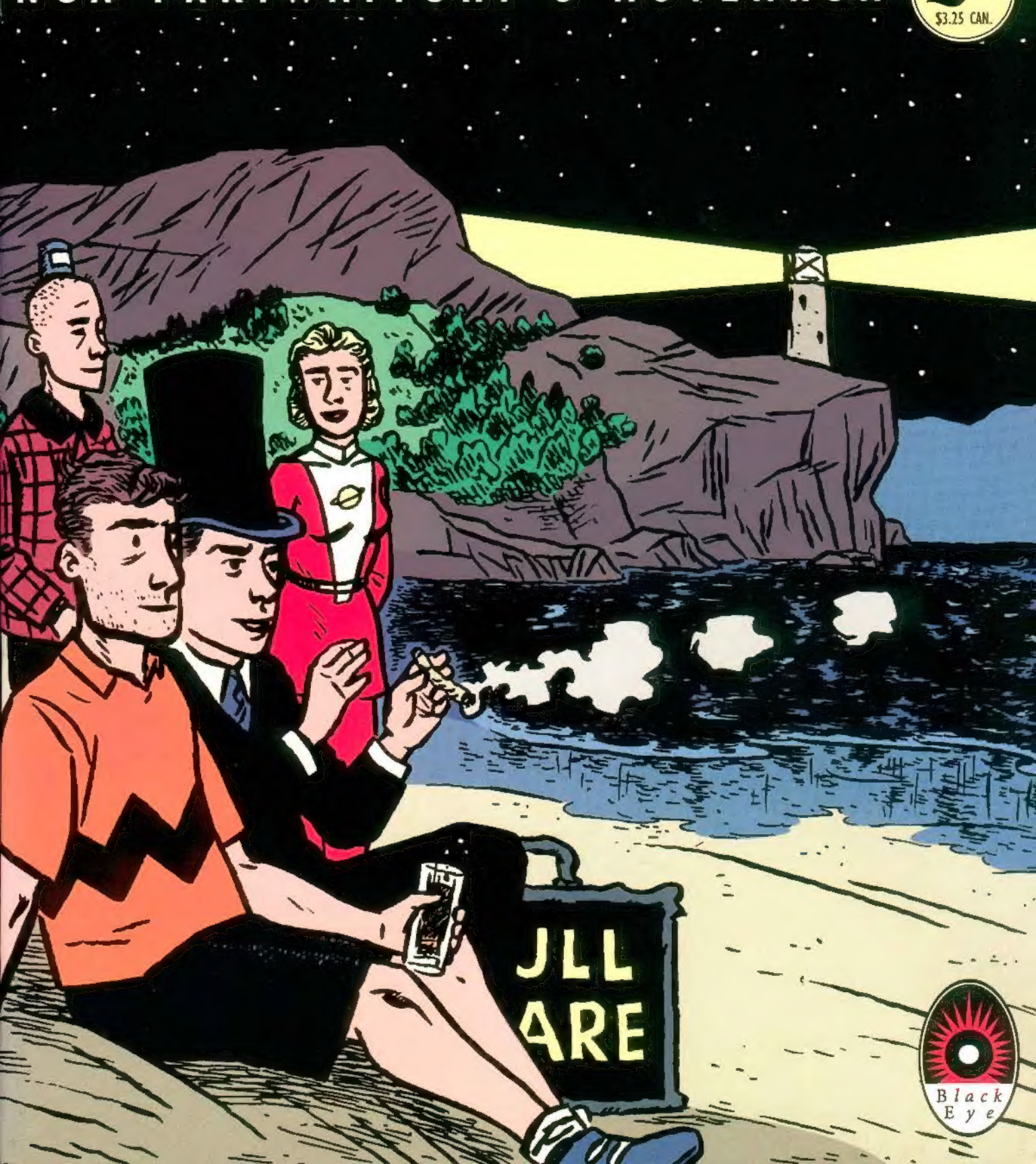
Pickle

No 9

FOR MATURE READERS

NGA PAKIWAITUHI O AOTEAROA

STILL ONLY $2.50 $3.25 CAN.



Black Eye

Pickle

N° 9, AUGUST 1996

by **Dylan Horrocks**
editor **Dolan Hicks (Mrs.)**
publisher **Michel Vrána**

Publication Design and Cover Colours by **Dylan Horrocks and Michel Vrána**

"Now we're in the age of 'Comics as air'."
– Osamu Tezuka

This issue is dedicated to Jay Stephens.

PICKLE #8, August 1996. Published by Black Eye Productions, 5135 Parc Ave., Suite #5, Montreal, QC H2V 4G3, Canada. Tel: 514-274-8375. Electronic Mail: mail@blackeye.com, World Wide Web: www.blackeye.com.

All characters, stories and art are copyright © 1996 Dylan Horrocks.

PRINTED IN CANADA

LETTER FROM HICKSVILLE

Well, dear ones, this issue of *Pickle* brings back countless memories. The Annual Hogan's Alley Day Party has been going on in Hicksville for nearly a hundred years, and although I don't remember all of them (good gracious I'm not *that* old!), I certainly recall plenty. For example, one year as a young girl, I dressed up as Buster Brown and caused all sorts of havoc, accompanied all the while by my dear puppy 'Offica Pup'. Another time when I rather controversially attended as the Dragon Lady; and many more recent costumes such as Aunt May, Mary Worth and the one that appears in this issue.

Which brings us to Harry's splendid idea for a competition for you, our much beloved readers. As I'm sure you know, every Hogan's Alley Day, Hicksville holds a huge beach party, for which everyone dresses up in costume as a cartoon character. The party Dylan has depicted in this issue is no exception. Hence our competition: send us a list of all the characters you recognise at our party (preferably noting the page and panel they appear in). The reader with the most correct identifications will receive a grand prize: a copy of *Ian Wishart's Vintage Winebox Guide*, a 96 page collection of cartoons about the Winebox Inquiry (New Zealand's Watergate) by various political cartoonists including Dylan's own 'Milo's Week' strip from the *NZ Listener*. (Anyone who wishes to order a copy of this entertaining and disturbing book can write to Howling at the Moon Productions, P.O. Box 16-233, Sandringham, Auckland 1003, New Zealand, with NZ $14.95 *plus* postage. Or if you're in New Zealand, simply get it from your local book shop. ISBN 0958356807). There will be other prizes too, so do write in even if you can only identify a few.

Café Underground fans – do not despair. Barney and Abraham have patched up their differences and are back at work on their magnum opus. But rather than serialising it in *Pickle*, they've decided to finish the whole thing and then publish it as a complete book sometime next year. We'll keep you posted, as Harry says!

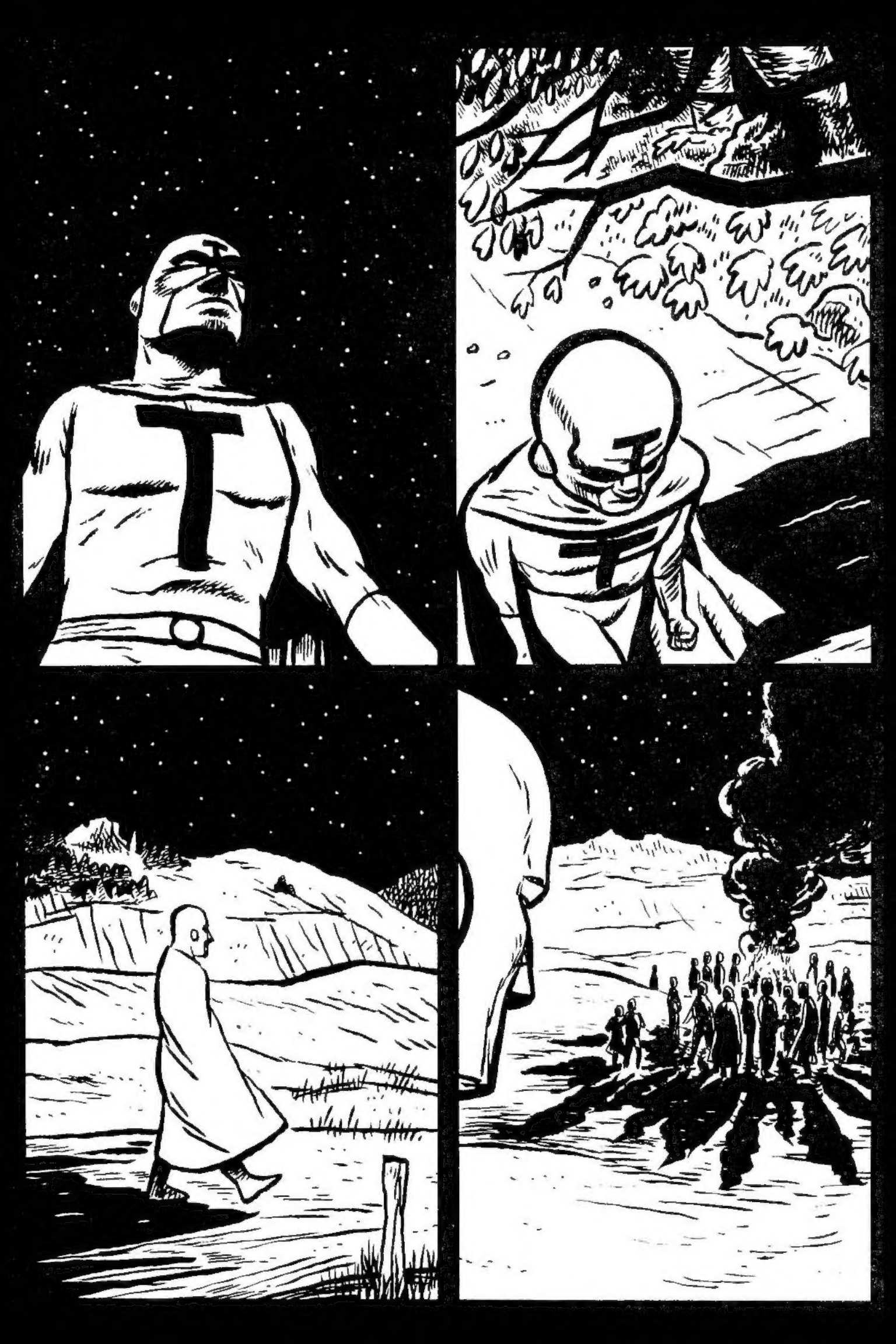
Once again, no room for letters this issue, but I promise next time I'll try extra hard to include some. Hope you enjoy the party!

Dolan Hicks

Dolan Hicks (mrs.)

The Story So Far:

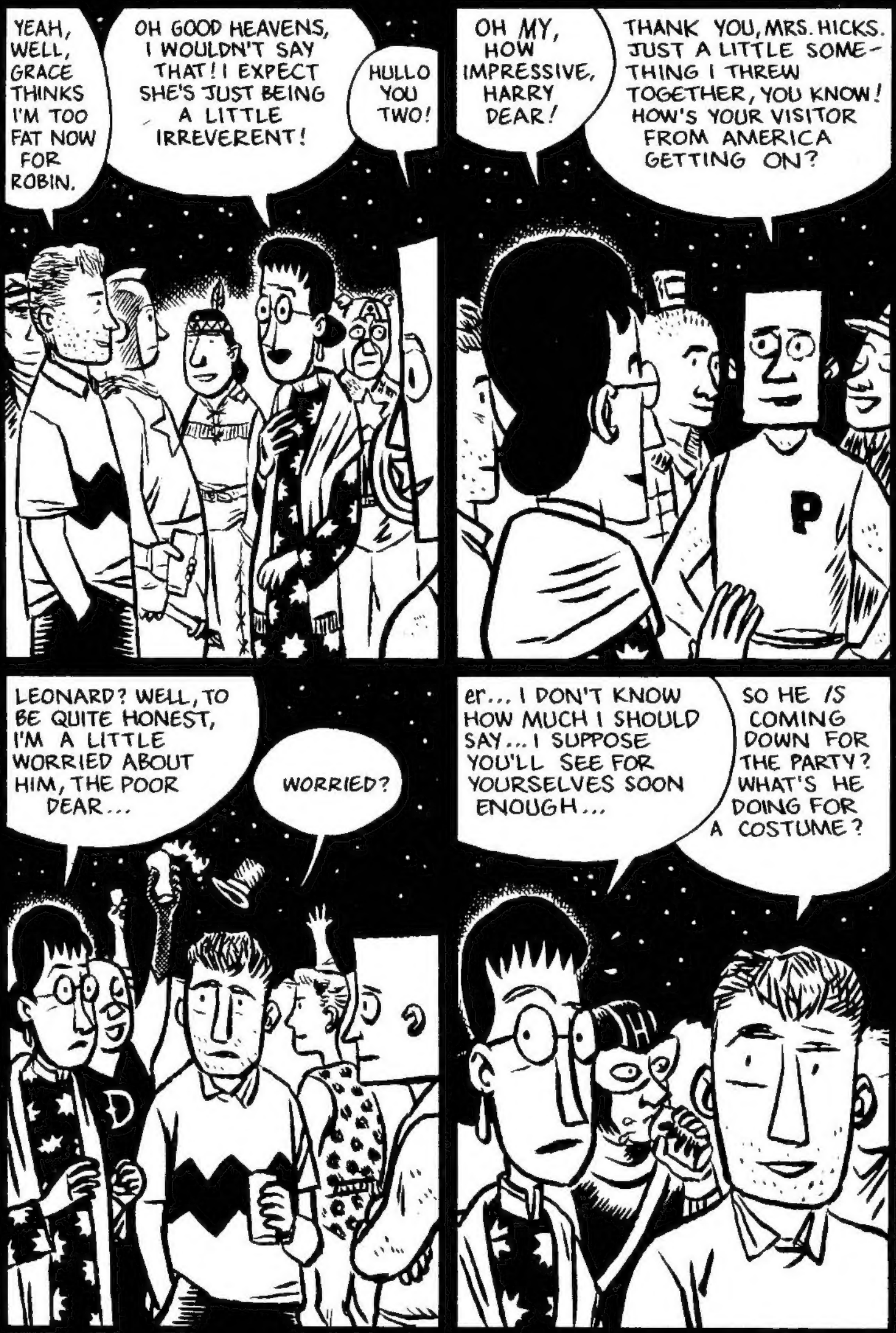
Leonard Batts, a comics journalist from *Comics World* magazine in America, is writing a book about world-famous comic creator Dick Burger, who rocketed to success with his first *Captain Tomorrow* graphic novel several years ago. Curious about Burger's early years, Leonard has travelled to Burger's home town: Hicksville, New Zealand, a remote settlement on the East Cape. However, Leonard soon finds that no-one in Hicksville is willing to talk about Burger, with the exception of Mrs. Hicks and Sam Zabel. Sam reveals to him that Burger did something years ago which earned him the hatred of Hicksville's residents. But even Sam refuses to tell Leonard what that terrible thing was – he says that only Kupe, a recluse who lives in the lighthouse overlooking Hicksville, could explain...



HI SAM
er- GRACE? NO... HELEN?
GRACE LET ME WEAR HER OLD COSTUME- IT'S SO COOL! I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO WEAR IT!
IT SUITS YOU.

THANKS. WOULD YOU LIKE TO DANCE?
OH, I'M STILL ON MY FIRST GALLON OF PUNCH. IT USUALLY TAKES FOUR OR FIVE BEFORE I'M WILLING TO DANCE.
I'LL TRY LATER THEN.
...
ZIGGY
HI SAM
HI SAM
HI GUYS.

IS SHE HERE YET?
UM, I DON'T THINK SO, DANTON... DO YOU... UH... WANT A DRINK?
IF YOU SEE HER, TELL HER I WANT TO TALK.
SURE
WHY, SAM, WHAT A LOVELY COSTUME! I WAS EXPECTING ROBIN OF COURSE, BUT THAT REALLY IS SPLENDID!
...
DULL CARE
THANKS, MRS. HICKS. YOURS IS A MASTERPIECE, AS ALWAYS. DO YOU KNOW WHAT GRACE IS WEARING TONIGHT?
NOT PRECISELY, DEAR. SHE DID CONSULT ME ON ONE OR TWO SEWING MATTERS, BUT I REALLY COULD NOT GUESS FROM THAT. YOU TWO ALWAYS MADE A FINE PAIR IN THE PAST. MOST APPROPRIATE, I THOUGHT.


YEAH, WELL, GRACE THINKS I'M TOO FAT NOW FOR ROBIN.
OH GOOD HEAVENS, I WOULDN'T SAY THAT! I EXPECT SHE'S JUST BEING A LITTLE IRREVERENT!
HULLO YOU TWO!
OH MY, HOW IMPRESSIVE, HARRY DEAR!
THANK YOU, MRS. HICKS. JUST A LITTLE SOMETHING I THREW TOGETHER, YOU KNOW! HOW'S YOUR VISITOR FROM AMERICA GETTING ON?
P
LEONARD? WELL, TO BE QUITE HONEST, I'M A LITTLE WORRIED ABOUT HIM, THE POOR DEAR...
WORRIED?
er... I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH I SHOULD SAY... I SUPPOSE YOU'LL SEE FOR YOURSELVES SOON ENOUGH...
SO HE IS COMING DOWN FOR THE PARTY? WHAT'S HE DOING FOR A COSTUME?

OH DEAR- I'D REALLY BETTER NOT -
AH HAH!
I THINK I'VE SPOTTED HER! 'SCUSE ME...
GREAT COSTUME, BUT IT SEEMS STRANGE SEEING HIM AS OTHER THAN ROBIN...
A FEW INDISCREET WORDS FROM GRACE, APPARENTLY.
P
STILL- CAN'T SAY IT DOESN'T SUIT HIM...
GOOD GRACIOUS! WHAT ARE YOU WEARING, DR. ROPATA?!
P
LL
HI SAM!
HI GUYS.
HI SAM!

NICE. BUT WHO IS IT?
YOU DON'T KNOW? I'M DISAPPOINTED IN YOU, SAM. HAVEN'T YOU READ 'VALJA DOMENA'?
OH, I GET IT... YOU'RE MILENA. BUT THAT'S CORNUCOPIAN - EMIL KÖPEN, ISN'T IT? I DIDN'T KNOW YOU READ CORNUCOPIAN COMICS!
THERE'S A LOT YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT ME, SAM. I'VE BEEN AROUND THESE LAST TWO YEARS.
YOU LOOK PERFECT. IT'S REALLY YOU.
I'M NOT SURE I SHOULDN'T BE OFFENDED BY THAT...
PROBABLY SHOULD.
HMPH.

DANTON SAID TO TELL YOU HE WANTS TO TALK.
SAM, IF YOU MENTION DANTON ONE MORE TIME, I SWEAR I'LL-
I CAN'T HELP IT, GRACE. IF YOU'D JUST TALK TO HIM, I WOULDN'T HAVE TO BE THE MESSENGER BOY ANY MORE! I'M SICK OF IT TOO, BUT---
OH MY GOD!
?
HI.
SERIOUS GEEK ALERT. I'M OUTTA HERE.

ARE YOU CRAZY?!! WHAT ON EARTH DROVE YOU TO COME LIKE THAT?!
I FIGURED IF I CAN'T GET ANYONE TO TALK BY BEING FRIENDLY, I'D TRY BEING PROVOCATIVE. PEOPLE LET ALL KINDS OF THINGS SLIP WHEN THEY'RE ANGRY.
YEAH, LIKE THEIR COMMITMENT TO NON-VIOLENCE. YOU'D BETTER BE CAREFUL...
HA!
GRACE.
YOU OWE ME BETTER THAN THIS, GRACE

...
I'M SORRY, DANTON. I REALLY AM. I WAS BEING TORN IN HALF.
DULL
I TOLD YOU TO GO TO KUPE.
BUT I COULDN'T. IT FELT LIKE ALL THESE FORCES WERE PULLING ON ME TO DO DIFFERENT THINGS AND I COULDN'T DO ANY OF THEM.
SO I RAN AWAY.
JUST LIKE WHEN YOU WERE A KID.
WHY COME BACK NOW?
...
I DON'T KNOW.

I'M WORRIED ABOUT LEONARD, MRS. HICKS. HE'S REALLY PUSHING IT WITH THIS CAPTAIN TOMORROW THING. SOMEONE'S PATIENCE IS GOING TO RUN OUT.
I FEAR YOU MAY BE RIGHT, SAM DEAR. BUT HE SAYS HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING...
I THINK I MIGHT'VE TOLD HIM TOO MUCH ALREADY. KUPE NEVER *SAID* TO KEEP IT A SECRET, BUT I DON'T THINK HE'D APPRECIATE HAVING IT SPLASHED ALL OVER *COMICS WORLD* MAGAZINE...
IS THAT WHY YOU DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING IN NEW YORK, DEAR?
PARTLY, BUT, WELL... NO. I MEAN, I WASN'T GOING TO TELL THE *WHOLE* STORY... IT WAS BASICALLY COWARDICE.
I'M SURE IF WE JUST EXPLAINED TO LEONARD THE NEED FOR DISCRETION, HE'D BE QUITE REASONABLE...
HI SAM. IT'S TIME YOU QUIT STALLING AND GAVE ME THAT DANCE YOU PROMISED!
BUT
er
YOU RUN ALONG AND HAVE FUN, DEARS. I'LL MIND THE PUNCH BOWL.

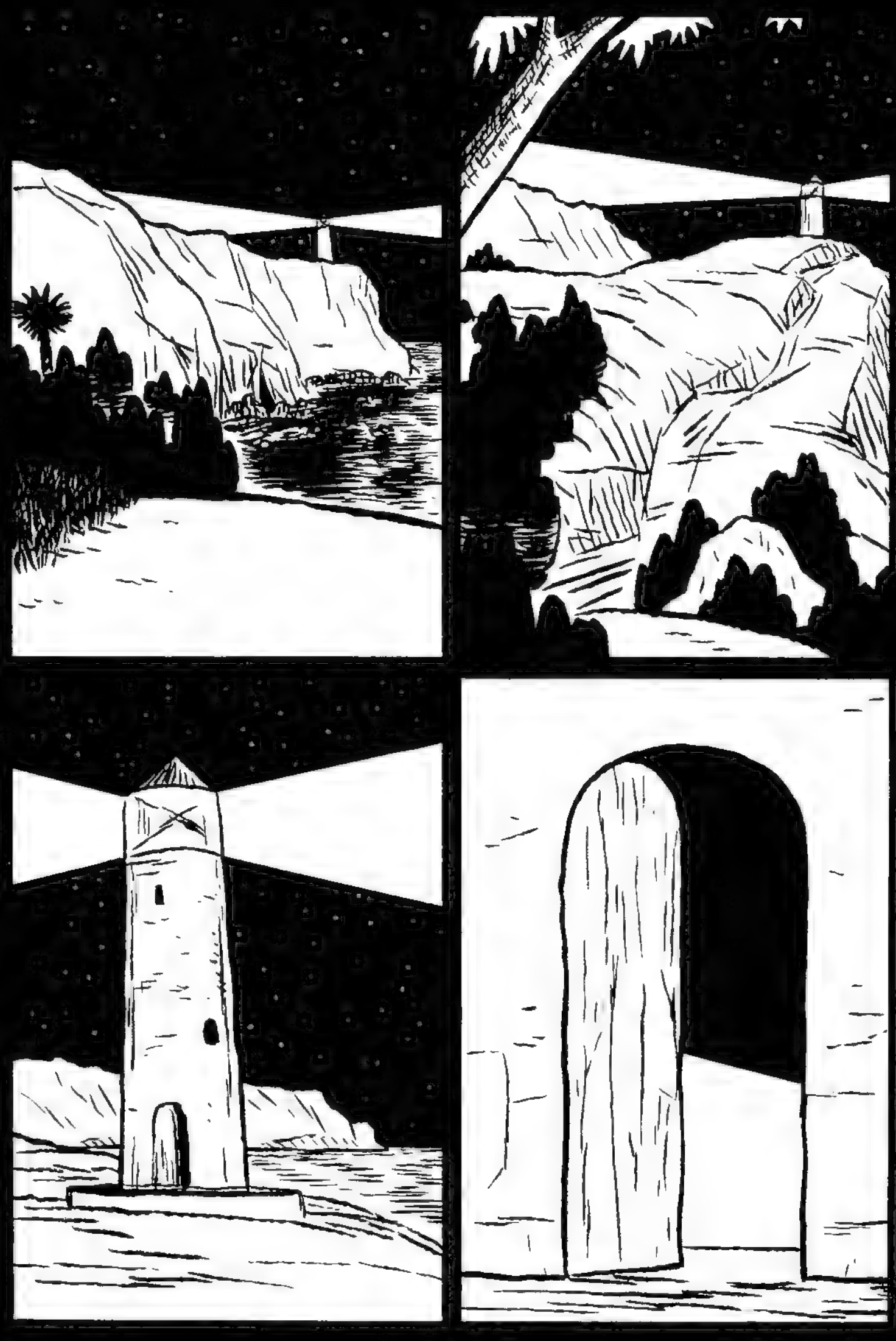
SO, SAM, ARE YOU SEEING ANYONE THESE DAYS?
WHO, ME? UH- WELL- UM-
WHEN YOU WALKED INTO THE FIEND - JUST LIKE THAT... IT WAS LIKE SEEING A GHOST. I THOUGHT YOU'D COME BACK SOME DAY, BUT I'D PRETTY MUCH ADJUSTED TO THE FACT THAT YOU WEREN'T AROUND, AND IT WAS ALL OVER.
MMM.
AND THEN THERE YOU WERE... AND WE'RE GAWKING AT EACH OTHER, LIKE WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY...
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY... I STILL DON'T.
IS THAT WHY YOU'VE BEEN AVOIDING ME?
THAT. AND BECAUSE I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT WANT TO GET BACK TOGETHER.

WELL, SAM'S MADE IT PRETTY CLEAR THERE'S NO HOPE OF THAT.
I THINK HE WANTS US TO TRY. SAM'S SUCH A FUCKING ROMANTIC, HE CAN'T BEAR THE THOUGHT OF ANYONE BREAKING UP...
WHAT ABOUT KUPE?
...
I DON'T KNOW, DANTON, I REALLY DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT KUPE.
MEANING IT'S NOT OVER.
MEANING I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT.

HOW'S MOPANI?
SHE'S FINE. SHE'S WITH IRENE IN AUCKLAND. SHE... SHE TOOK YOUR SIDE WHEN YOU LEFT.
SHE WHAT?
YOU KNOW. SHE BLAMED ME FOR IT. WOULDN'T LET ANYONE SAY A BAD WORD ABOUT YOU. I SENT HER TO AUCKLAND AFTER A WHILE TO LET US BOTH COOL OFF.
I RANG HER THE OTHER NIGHT TO TELL HER YOU WERE BACK. SHE... UH... I DON'T THINK SHE KNEW WHAT TO SAY EITHER.
IS SHE COMING HERE SOON?

I DON'T KNOW. IRENE'S BEING A BIT DIFFICULT AT THE MOMENT.
SELF-CENTRED BITCH.
FUNNY. THAT'S WHAT SHE CALLED YOU.
...
I REALLY MISS MOPANI, DANTON. I'D LIKE TO SEE HER.
...
IT'S A PITY SHE'S NOT YOURS. I ALWAYS WISHED SHE WAS YOURS, INSTEAD OF IRENE'S... SO DOES SHE.

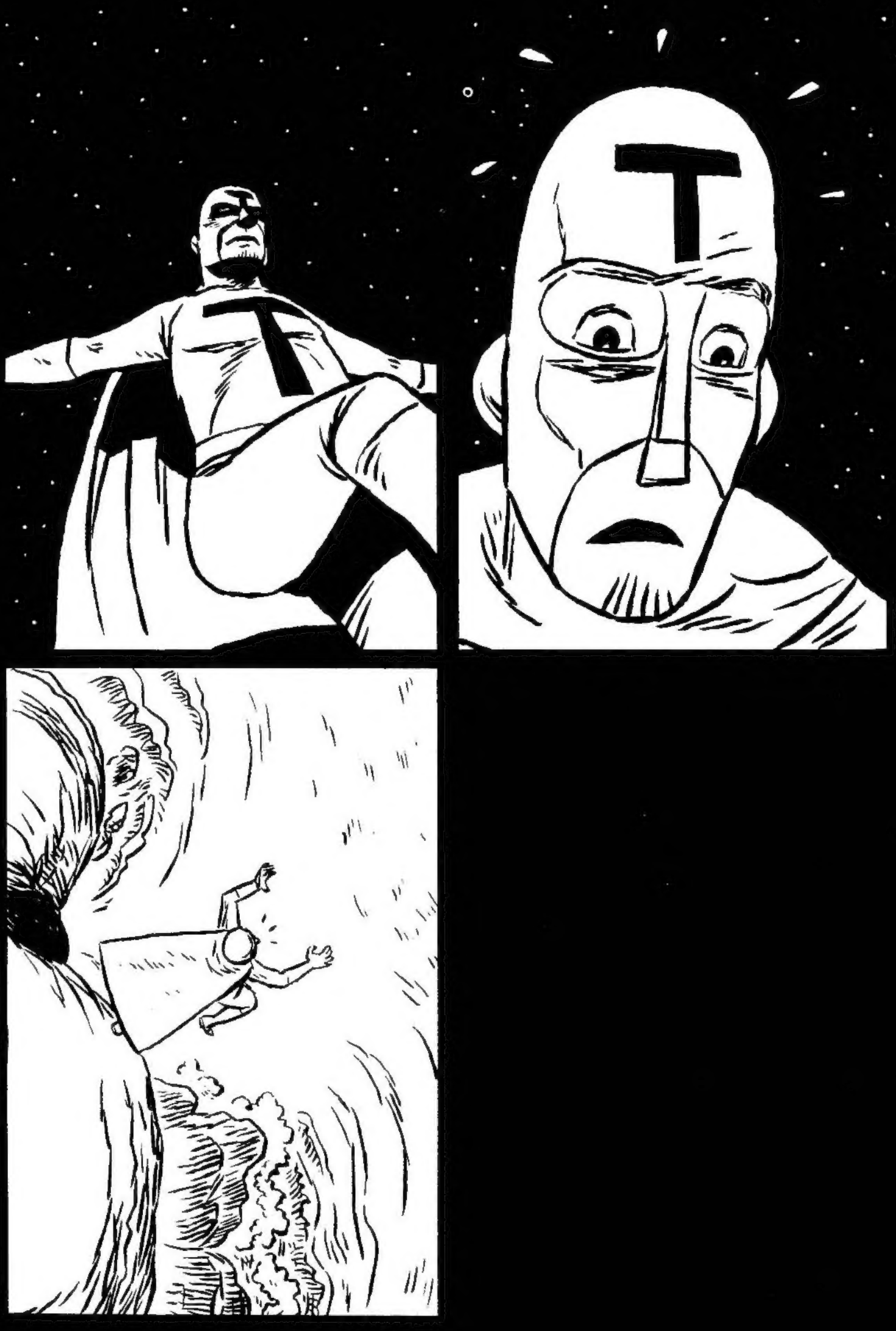
I HAVE TO GO NOW.
TELL MOPANI I LOVE HER.
SURE ...
SEE YA GRACE
HAPPY
DAY
DULL CARE
DULL CARE



I KNEW YOU WAS TROUBLE THE MINUTE I LAID EYES ON YOU. SHOULD'VE FED YOU TO FANG, Y' LITTLE -
NOW, HUCK, THERE'S NO NEED FOR THAT KIND OF TALK! LET'S JUST HEAR WHAT HE HAS TO SAY FOR HIMSELF.
MR. BATTS?
I'M HERE TO WRITE ABOUT DICK BURGER, WHO I BELIEVE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT COMICS CREATOR SINCE THE 1960s.
RIGHT! THAT DOES IT!
HOLD ON, HYRAM! AS ILL-MANNERED AND INTELLECTUALLY CHALLENGED AS HE IS, THIS BLOKE IS STILL A GUEST OF MRS. HICKS! WE CAN'T GO ROUND PUNCHING HIM OUT JUST 'CAUSE HE TALKS A LOAD OF SHIT...

SHE'S RIGHT, HYRAM. LEAVE HIM BE.
OK, OK, BUT I'LL TELL YOU A LITTLE SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR PRECIOUS DICK BURGER, MATE...
AH HAH!
HYRAM!
HE'S A THIEF AND A BULLY. AND A COWARD. AND IF HE EVER SETS FOOT IN THIS TOWN AGAIN...
HEY! I WAS TALKING TO YOU!
LET 'IM GO, HYRAM. HE'S NOT WORTH THE EFFORT.
?

HEY!
OOF! WATCH OUT!
?
...



AAAAAAAA

THE HICKSVILLE HIT PARADE

David Hough, our NZ Comics Correspondent continues our introduction to Nga Pakiwaituhi o Aotearoa.!

Last issue, we listed some of the many anthology comics from New Zealand. This time around, a very brief look at some solo comics.

If you want to order anything listed here, just send your order to Mrs. Hicks at P.O. Box 5312, Wellesley Street, Auckland, New Zealand, and she'll pass it on to the relevant people. All prices are in NZ$ (which is usually worth around US$ 0.60). Please add US $1.50 postage for up to 5 comics, or US $2.50 for more than 5.

Solo comics in New Zealand date back to the forties, as **Tim Bollinger** has discovered in researching his book ***Back of Beyond***, a history of NZ comics due some time in 1997. One of my favourite of these early classics is ***Crash O'Kane: An All-Black on Mars***, by **Eric Resetar** (late 1950's). These days there's a profusion of self-published comic around, including **Tim Bollinger**'s own ***Attitute Problem*** (no.'s 1-3, $6 each), a mixture of autobiographical strips, political satire and surreal anarchy. Tim is one of NZ's most insightful political cartoonists, as well as a visionary comic book creator. He has other comics available, too, including his classic ***Absolute Heroes*** epic ($6), so write and ask him

Lars Cawley has just moved to Japan for a while, to try the manga market, but Mrs. Hicks has some copies of his excellent ***Check the Blinker*** no. 1 ($5), the ominous debut of an epic story that promises mystery, romance, and robots. What more could you want?

Timothy Kidd's ***Half a World Away*** (no.'s 1-5, $3 each) is already becoming a NZ comics classic. A small town, a boy, a girl, a VW... all the elements of the NZ condition! Quiet, intense, brooding, creatively ambitious. Highly recommended.

Adam Jamison is as prolific as he is talented. After churning out 4 bi-monthly issues of ***Cataract*** (no.'s 1-4, $3 each), a mixture of short stories and serials, he is now producing a *fortnightly* dream comic called ***Blink*** (no.'s 1-3, $3 each.), a beautifully drawn dream-diary in the Jim Woodring tradition.

Willi Saunders is a hippy – and I mean a goddamed long-haired *hippy*! Nobody can be more nostalgic about the sixties than those born in the seventies, and young Willi is seriously psychedelic. Check out his ***Shlipp Commics*** (no's 1-2, $3 each) for a hit of his Crumb/Griffin/Hewlett-influenced tripping.

Karl Wills, NZ's own cross between E.C. Segar and Viz has taken early twentieth century 'bigfoot' cartooning and thrust it into the realm of surrealist toilet humour. He's as politically correct as Dave Sim, but he's hilarious, talented and experimental (come to think of it, so's Dave Sim...) Try his ***Jackass Comics*** (no. 1, $5) which collects his recent *Smithsonian Book of Newspaper Comics*-inspired mini-comic.

Ant Sang & **Kelvin Soh** are both active members of the **Mainstream** group, who publish under the **Tuatara Press** imprint. Ant's ***Filth*** (no. 1-6, $3 each) is full of teenage angst and soul-searching, while Kelvin's ***Velvet Butterfly*** (no. 1 $2) combines a manga-style with **Scott McLoud**-inspired iconographic experiments. The mentor for the **Mainstream** group is **Paul Rogers**, whose new colo comic ***Cash*** (no. 1, $3) is now out. Ask about other Tuatara Press Comics, too.

Speaking of **Mainstream** comics, Craig Petersen's ***Southern Tribe*** (no.'s 1-3, $4 each) is NZ's first significant superhero comic since Colin Wilson (et al.) produced Captain Sunshine in the seventies. Influences include Akira, Byrne and Image.

Oh there's so many... **Andy Conlan**'s ***Strumming Teeth*** (no.'s 1-12, $3 each), a local cross between Dan Clowes and R. Crumb, Pete Adam's Rat Race gag strips ($6); the eccentric **Peter Johnstone**, whose ***Romeo & Juliet*** ($5) is truly surreal; **Glen Stewart**'s ***Choice Guy*** ($5) and ***Truck Guy*** ($5), two of the strangest and funniest things published here (sort of like Sam Henderson meets Gary Panter); and so on...

Of course, there are also other NZ cartoonists making waves overseas, including **Roger Langridge** (***Art D'Ecco***, and ***Zoot***, Fantagraphics), **Martin Emond** (***White Trash***, Tundra), **Peter Rees** (***Playgrounds***, Fantagraphics), **Simon Morse** (***Verotika***, Verotik and Straitjacket Ninja, Kitchen Sink), **Colin Wilson** (***La Jeunesse de Lt. Blueberry***, Dargaud, France), ***Teri Rota*** (***Morning***, Kodansha, Japan).

As you can see, Aotearoa has one of the most active comics scenes around. Hopefully, we've inspired you to sample its many and delectable fruits.

—David Hough
our NZ comics correspondent

GLOSSARY

AOTEAROA: Maori name for New Zealand. 'Land of the long white cloud'.

AROHA: 'love' (maori.)

AUCKLAND: largest city in New Zealand (population c. 1 million), dominated by its harbour and a series of extinct (we hope!) volcanic cones. Also called 'Tamaki Makaurau' — 'Land of a thousand lovers'.

CORNUCOPIA: small and obscure country visited by Grace during her two-year absence from Hicksville.

KUPE: (pronounce coo-pay) according to some oral traditions, the first Maori explorer to discover Aotearoa was Kupe from Hawaiki.

NGA PAKIWAITUHI O AOTEAROA: 'New Zealand comics'. 'Pakiwaituhi' is derived from 'Pakiwaitara' (fiction, folklore) and 'Tuhi' (drawn and/or write).

VALJA DOMENA: one of Cornucupt cartoonist Emil Kopen's best-loved graphic novels, telling the story of Milena, a Bethgemani (or member of the sisterhood of witches.)

VALJA DOMENA

i Emil Kópen

KOMEK